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Statistical Programme 2015

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The document presents the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe statistical programme for 2015. It is closely linked to the Biennial Programme of Work 2014-2015 (ECE/CES/2013/15), adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2013 and approved the UNECE Executive Committee in June 2014.

The Statistical Programme for 2015 was approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at its October 2014 meeting.

The preliminary list of meetings held or planned to be held from 2015 onwards is annexed to this document. The list of meetings and workshops held in 2014 is provided in document ECE/CES/2015/14.

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I. Background

1. The annual statistical programme for 2015 is closely linked to the biennial programme of work 2014-2015, approved by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2013 (document ECE/CES/2013/15) and by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) in June 2014. Furthermore, the programme takes into account the outcome of the UNECE review by EXCOM.

2. The UNECE review acknowledged that "the UNECE Statistics subprogramme, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and its related subsidiary bodies work within current mandates in an efficient way, producing concrete results (methodological principles, recommendations, guidelines and databases) in a regular and ongoing way that have clear value added for the region and beyond, and that attract extra-budgetary funding including from outside the region."

3. The review also concluded that "the subprogramme should continue implementing existing mandates under the overall guidance of CES and EXCOM, and continue the good cooperation with partner organizations such as Eurostat, the CIS Statistical Committee, OECD, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)." EXCOM requested that particular attention be given to the work on measuring sustainable development, and that the subprogramme continue its capacity-building activities from extra-budgetary resources which are of particular benefit to the countries in the ECE region.

4. The Statistical Programme is compiled annually. It complements the UNECE biennial programme of work by providing a short description of each activity, according to the following structure:

(a) What the activity is about;

(b) Why the activity is needed, which issues or problems it addresses;

(c) Where the mandate comes from: link to a United Nations initiative, CES, CES Bureau decision or other;

(d) The main actions in 2015;

(e) The expected results and impact of these actions.

II. Introduction

5. According to the Strategic Framework for 2014-2015, UNECE works with member countries "to improve the quality of official statistics at the national and international levels, and to ensure the coordination of international statistical activities undertaken in the UNECE region". The work is carried out in close cooperation with countries and international organizations, including countries outside the UNECE region. The aim is to improve national statistical information needed for policy making, and for assessing progress made towards international development goals.

6. Work is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES)[1] to ensure that it focuses on priorities of member countries. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the

[1] The CES is composed of the Heads of the national statistical organizations in the UNECE region and includes in addition Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand and Republic of Korea. The major international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region also participate in the work, such as the statistical office of the European Commission (Eurostat), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Interstate

secretariat for the Conference and undertakes substantive work mandated by the Conference and its Bureau. The main objective of CES is to improve national official statistics and their international comparability, promote close coordination of international statistical activities, respond to any emerging needs for international statistical cooperation, and develop and adopt statistical standards in the UNECE region[2]. Furthermore, the work responds to the guidance provided by UNECE EXCOM and global initiatives of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).

7. The work follows and promotes the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, a standard that was developed by the CES, adopted by UNECE in 1992[3], and globally by UNSC in 1994. In July 2013, ECOSOC endorsed the Fundamental Principles confirming them at the policy level, followed by endorsement at the General Assembly in 2014 (resolution A/RES/68/261).

8. CES addresses current priorities of member countries in a flexible and coordinated way. Flexibility is ensured by using teams of specialists created for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, output and time frame. The work leads to outputs such as statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations, which often have a global impact.

9. The following subject areas were identified as a strategic focus of work by the CES Bureau and the UNECE review: sustainable development; globalization; population issues including poverty and inequality, and the use of censuses and registers; modernization of statistical production and services; and capacity building in areas highlighted by global assessments of statistical systems.

10. The work is carried out in four main areas: (1) coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region; (2) methodological work to develop and promote the implementation of statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations; (3) capacity building; and (4) the UNECE statistical database.

III. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region

11. Coordination of international statistical work in the region is a key task of the CES with the aim to avoid duplication of work, find synergies, use resources efficiently and reduce burden on national statistical offices. Furthermore, international cooperation, enshrined in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, is an important factor contributing to the improvement of official statistics in all countries.

12. The Conference and its Bureau provide several mechanisms to ensure the coordination in practice: the regular meetings of the Conference and its Bureau, the CES seminars exploring foundational issues of official statistics and emerging topics, in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas, and the Database of International Statistical Activities.

13. The topics for the CES seminars are selected by the member countries and address issues of current interest. In 2015, the first seminar will discuss the response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will focus on how official statistics can be most efficiently utilized for monitoring SDGs. The statistical community should be ready for reporting on SDGs as of 2016. These issues have been high on the policy agenda in particular following the Rio+20 Summit, its outcome document "The

Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS-STAT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, etc.

[2] ECE/CES/2007/8 'Rules and Procedures governing the work of the CES, its Bureau and teams of specialists'.

future we want", and the Report of the *High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. The latter calls for regional commissions, including ECE, to coordinate reporting on the sustainable development agenda at the regional level.

14. The second seminar of the Conference in 2015 will deal with modernization of statistical production and services, and managing for efficiency. The seminar will discuss the modernization work to provide input to the activities of the High-Level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services, and keep their work closely aligned with national priorities and requirements.

15. The CES Bureau will meet twice in 2015 to steer the CES programme of work and review selected areas of international statistical work. The aim of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities, identify gaps or duplication of work and address emerging issues. The first topic, process-oriented approach to statistical production, was reviewed in February 2015. The topic is closely linked to modernization of statistical production. Many statistical organizations have moved to, or are considering a more process-oriented approach to streamline production of official statistics. There are advantages and disadvantages to different organizational structures, and thus a review of approaches that best support statistical production will be useful for many offices.

16. The second topic that was reviewed in February 2015 was labour mobility and globalization. *The Guide on the Impact of Globalization on National Accounts* identified recording of international labour mobility and links between labour statistics and national accounts as areas that require further work. When launching work on globalization in 2006, the CES Bureau decided to first address the economic aspects of globalization, but underlined the need to keep social issues related to globalization on the agenda. The review addressed the challenge of increasing international labour movements to measurement and analysis of labour markets, societal development and labour productivity. This topic will be further discussed at the CES plenary session in June 2015.

17. Some in-depth reviews carried out by the Bureau earlier will lead to follow-up work in 2015, such as:

(a) The review of poverty measurement concluded that there is an urgent need to address poverty measurement, and the Bureau launched a Task Force to develop a coherent set of indicators to monitor poverty and to develop common definitions, methodologies and indicators.

(b) The review of Big Data considered opportunities and challenges brought to official statistics by the exponentially growing availability of data. As a result, an international collaboration project in this area was started, overseen by the High-level Group (HLG) for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services.

18. Furthermore, the Bureau discussed in October 2014 the follow-up to two previous in-depth reviews that may lead to further work in 2015, such as:

(a) The review of entrepreneurship noted the lack of readily available and comparable data to analyze the role of entrepreneurship in stimulating economic growth. The Bureau will discuss possible further work in October 2015.

(b) The review of leading, composite and sentiment indicators and official statistics highlighted concerns about the objectivity and reliability of these indicators, and the unclear role of official statistics in this context. The 2014 CES plenary session further discussed the topic to obtain input from all CES members. The Bureau asked UNECE to organize a seminar to discuss the role of national statistical offices in this area.

19. UNECE updates annually the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA). The database is a compendium of the annual statistical programmes of international organizations in the UNECE region. The 2015 issue will be available online to be used by

countries and international organizations. The Secretariat will undertake an evaluation of the uses of DISA and consider a redesign of the related work processes. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to update the underlying Classification of International Statistical Activities to include new, emerging areas of international statistical work, such as climate change related statistics, composite indicators and geo-spatial data.

IV. Methodological work in various statistical areas

20. The aim of the methodological work is to develop and promote international standards, guidelines and recommendations. The work responds to countries' demand to improve the efficiency, quality and comparability of official statistics and is undertaken at the request of the Conference and its Bureau.

21. Flexibility of work is ensured by using teams of specialists (steering groups, task forces). The groups are set up by the CES or its Bureau for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, membership, output, timeframe (2-3 years) and a sunset clause. The work results in publicly available methodological and practical guidelines, collections of leading practices in statistics and training materials. To ensure high quality and relevance, the outputs are consulted with all CES members before being approved by the Conference. New working methods are being piloted in modernization activities, where there is a stronger need to deliver results that are "good enough", in a much shorter time frame using "sprint sessions", short-term task teams, etc.

22. UNECE maintains virtual mechanisms for communication to facilitate exchange of ideas between national and international statistical organizations. These mechanisms typically take the form of wikis, discussion forums and web conferences, bringing together specialists in collaborative environments and accelerating progress in many areas of official statistics, while reducing the need for physical Task Force meetings and the associated travel costs.

23. Three task forces finalized their work in 2014: Climate Change Related Statistics, Indicators on Gender Equality and Crime Classification. The Steering Group on Measuring Health Status was also closed in 2014. Task Forces that will finalize their work in 2015 include groups on: Socio-Economic Conditions of Migrants, Quality of Employment, Business Registers, Global Production and Population and Housing Censuses. In January 2014, the Bureau set up a new Task Force on Poverty Measurement. In October 2014, the Bureau set up a new Task Force on valuing unpaid household work, a Steering Group on climate change-related statistics with a Task Force to develop a set of key indicators on climate issues.

A. Economic statistics

24. UNECE is working with countries to further develop and promote implementation of international standards and recommendations to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics, particularly in the areas of national accounts, globalization, price statistics, business registers and short-term statistics.

25. UNECE promotes the implementation of the global standard: 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) which provides a comprehensive framework for producing economic accounts adapted to policy needs and the changing global economy. This work is part of the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The work is undertaken under the coordination of the regional advisory body, the Steering Group on National Accounts, and in consultation with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts which coordinates globally the implementation of the standard. As recommended by the Group of Experts on National

Accounts, convened jointly with Eurostat and OECD, in 2015 UNECE will assist the countries in developing a communication strategy for the 2008 SNA and will work on developing better measures of the non-observed economy. UNECE will continue to provide methodological guidance and training workshops on the implementation of 2008 SNA in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in cooperation with regional partners.

26. Globalization, in terms of growing cross-border movement of people, capital, goods and services, has a significant impact on the economy and poses challenges to the compilers of statistics in all countries. The CES Bureau set up a Task Force at the end of 2011 to work on the conceptual and measurement challenges posed by global production. The Task Force addressed a number of unresolved conceptual issues arising from 2008 SNA and the *Balance of Payments Manual revision 6* in relation to global production, and developed guidance on implementation aspects. The Task Force finalized the *Guide on Measuring Global Production* in the end of 2014 and will present it for endorsement at the CES in 2015. UNECE will continue to collaborate with other international expert groups dealing with the impact of globalization on economic statistics e.g. Friends of the Chair Group on International Trade and Globalization. UNECE jointly with Eurostat and OECD will organize a special meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts in July 2015 to discuss practical experience with data collection and compilation methods in respect to global production arrangements.

27. UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other partners promotes the implementation of international standards and recommendations on Consumer Price Indices (CPI). The biennial meeting of the Expert Group on CPI in May 2014, decided to update the existing Consumer Price Index Manual (2004) to reflect technical and methodological developments. UNECE will actively contribute to updating the CPI Manual, together with ILO, IMF, Eurostat, OECD, World Bank and OECD. A first draft of the Manual will be discussed in the joint UNECE/ILO Expert Group meeting on CPI in May 2016. UNECE will continue its work on short-term economic statistics for the EECCA countries, such as dissemination of industrial production statistics and supporting application of seasonal adjustment in national statistical offices.

28. UNECE supports the development of statistical business registers, which are indispensable for efficient data collection and for the production of business statistics. A Task Force on International Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers is preparing practical guidance and recommendations to countries on how to establish and maintain a statistical business register. The guidelines are being prepared in close collaboration with the UN Statistics Division in New York to be applicable globally, in countries with developed and with less developed statistical systems. Methodological and technical developments in business registers will be discussed at the biennial Expert Group meeting organized in cooperation with Eurostat and OECD.

B. Social and demographic statistics

29. In recent years, the need to measure people's well-being and social environment has increased. It is further accentuated by the growing implications of ageing population on all spheres of society. UNECE activities in social and demographic statistics aim at improving statistics related to the areas of high policy relevance. The work in 2015 will focus on population and housing censuses, and on the measurement of population ageing, migration, gender issues, poverty, human capital and unpaid work.

30. UNECE is preparing Recommendations on population and housing censuses with a focus on their modernization. Population and housing censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems, providing baseline information on the population and the

housing stock which is used to produce other statistics, and for planning public infrastructure and services. There are increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden and privacy, which challenge the conduct of traditional censuses in many countries. Therefore, there is a need for further work on innovative methods of census taking, making use of registers and other solutions that improve efficiency. Since 2012, UNECE has coordinated the work of nine CES task forces charged with the preparation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses*. To ensure consistency with the census recommendations at global and regional levels, the work is coordinated with the UN Statistical Division in New York and Eurostat. The Recommendations will be finalized in 2015 and submitted to the CES plenary session for endorsement in June 2015. After this, UNECE will embark on a series of workshops and training activities aimed at supporting member countries in the implementation of the new recommendations.

31. In migration statistics, UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of migration data in the member countries. This responds to the strong demand for more and better data on migration, expressed, among others, at the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the United Nations General Assembly. In 2015, a CES task force will finalize guidelines on the production of statistics on circular migration. Further work is considered to develop a harmonized framework for assessing data quality of migration statistics and to provide guidelines on the integration of multiple data sources for measuring migration. UNECE will produce a guide on the use of administrative data and household surveys to measure international migration specific to the needs of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data, UNECE will continue to improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics.

32. UNECE work on gender statistics includes sharing knowledge and experience at biennial work sessions, developing guidelines and indicators, collecting and disseminating data and building capacity in member countries. The need for better gender statistics is again prominently emphasized in the current 20-year review of the Beijing Platform of Action. In 2013-2015, UNECE is carrying out a project on gender statistics together with two other UN regional commissions to strengthen the capacities of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to measure and analyse progress in achieving gender equality. The work is based on the set of indicators of gender equality finalized by a CES task force in 2014. In 2015, the activities include a sub-regional workshop; national stakeholder consultations to formulate national action plans and a pilot national data collection to address selected data gaps.

33. In 2013, a CES task force completed guidelines for time-use surveys. These surveys are indispensable for measuring well-being, unpaid work and gender equality. The Guidelines highlight several areas requiring further methodological work, such as the use of light time-use surveys and modern technologies, and the measurement of subjective well-being. In 2015, UNECE is pursuing a systematic collection of national practices in preparation for subsequent methodological work in these areas. The Bureau decided to launch new work on the measurement of unpaid household work. This will aim at producing guidelines for resolving the measurement challenges in this area where a harmonized approach is currently lacking.

34. Since 2013, a CES task force has been working on improving and harmonizing ageing-related statistics. Population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social processes, affecting all domains of society. These statistics are, therefore, in high demand by policymakers. However, they remain dispersed and have gaps and inconsistencies. The 2012 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing and the 2013 UNECE International Conference on Population and Development reinforced the call for improved statistics on ageing. In 2015, the Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics,

composed of statisticians, policymakers and academics, will continue its work to develop recommendations on ageing-related statistics.

35. UNECE has been leading work on measuring quality of employment jointly with Eurostat and ILO to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. An Expert Group has been working since 2012 to develop a statistical framework for measuring quality of employment, including the conceptual basis and practical recommendations on measurement issues. The draft report of the Expert Group is planned to be presented to the CES plenary session in June 2015 for endorsement.

36. Since 2013, a CES task force is pursuing work on the measurement of human capital. Statistics on the stock of human capital are needed to understand drivers of economic growth, the functioning of the labour market and to assess the long-term sustainability of a country's development path. Furthermore, information on the human capital distribution among population sub-groups is crucial for understanding inequality, social inclusion and quality of life. In 2015, the task force will continue its work to develop the *Guide for Measuring Human Capital*, in coordination with relevant other expert groups of UNECE, OECD and Eurostat. The Guide is planned to be completed in 2016.

37. The monitoring of Millennium Development Goals and the recent discussions on the post-2015 development agenda have underlined the importance of measuring poverty, inequality and vulnerability. Countries and international organizations need comparable data and harmonized data sets, but no coherent set of indicators to measure poverty exists. In follow-up to the seminar 'The way forward in poverty measurement' (2013), CES Bureau launched a task force to harmonize poverty measurement and establish a set of poverty indicators for countries in the UNECE region. Beside experts from national statistical offices, the task force includes experts from major international organizations active in poverty measurement, such as Eurostat, OECD, UNDP and the World Bank. In 2015, the task force will pursue its work, scheduled for completion in 2016. In May 2015, UNECE will hold a seminar on poverty measurement.

C. Sustainable development, environment and climate change statistics, and Millennium Development Goals

38. Sustainable development is high on the policy agenda in the context of setting up the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 development framework. The new goals and related targets and indicators are expected to be agreed upon in 2015. The Rio+20 outcome documents, the *Report of the eminent persons* and the Open Working group on SDGs call for a data revolution, improved quality of statistics, and a regular mechanism for monitoring the achievement of the goals with the involvement of regional commissions. The UNECE underlined the importance of the measurement of sustainable development in its biennial session in 2013 and in the UNECE review.

39. UNECE will continue its strong involvement in measuring sustainable development to follow up on the implementation of the *CES Recommendations on measuring sustainable development*, prepared jointly with UNECE, Eurostat and OECD, and adopted by CES in 2013. Following the 2013 CES seminar on challenges in measuring sustainable development and implementing SEEA, stocktaking reports will be prepared on (a) measuring transboundary impacts of sustainable development, (b) measuring sustainable development at different scales (subnational, regional) and (c) linking related subjective and objective indicators. The analysis of the pilot testing of the CES Recommendations by eight countries (Australia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine) will guide the fine-tuning of the framework and indicator sets, and linking and

adjusting them to SDGs. The work will contribute to setting up a monitoring mechanism for the achievement of SDGs.

40. Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics for environmental monitoring. A Joint Task Force of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES is striving to improve the production and quality of environmental statistics in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. The work is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA), Eurostat and UNSD. It contributes to the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument - shared Environment Information System (ENPI-SEIS). In 2015, the Joint Task Force will focus on production and sharing of environmental indicators from the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. The work will start with the agreed eight core indicators from the Guidelines and will be extended to all indicators over a longer term.

41. In 2015, UNECE will also promote the implementation of the newly adopted standard, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in the region, in collaboration with existing working groups and UNSD, and evaluate data availability and capacity of statistical offices to produce the necessary data. The 2013 CES seminar on challenges in measuring sustainable development and implementing SEEA noted that countries need capacity building to support the implementation of SEEA. Furthermore, the high-level seminar on the same topic for the countries of Easter Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in June 2013 asked for support in the implementation, and for a forum to share experience and discuss specific problems in this area. Following a CES decision, a seminar will be organized in spring 2015 to exchange experience in the implementation of SEEA, in collaboration with OECD and other organizations.

42. The CES plenary session endorsed the *CES recommendations on climate change related statistics* in April 2014. The Bureau established a Steering Group to support their implementation to improve the usefulness of official statistics for climate policies, greenhouse gas emission inventories and analysing the causes and impacts of climate change. The Bureau also established a dedicated Task Force to develop an internationally comparable set of key climate change related statistics building on the SEEA Central Framework. Further in 2015, a meeting will be organized involving national statistical offices, greenhouse gas inventory producers and key international organizations active in the area, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, World Meteorological Organization etc. The meeting will enhance collaboration among statistical and climate communities, share ideas and good practices, discuss measurement issues and identify priorities for further development work.

43. UNECE supports countries in measuring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The work is conducted in close collaboration with the other regional commissions and UNSD. In 2015, driven by demand and depending on available funds, UNECE will organize a sub-regional workshop and advisory missions on the monitoring and final reporting on MDGs. The MDG database will continue to be used to disseminate new national and international data and as a valuable tool to identify and to resolve data discrepancies. UNECE will adapt the tool to the new post-2015 (SDG) goals. The database has also been used for the UNECE *Report on Achieving the MDGs in Europe and Central Asia* and for regional inter-agency reports. UNECE is contributing to establishing the post-2015 development agenda through various channels such as the Working Group on Lessons Learned of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on MDG indicators and the UN Task Team Working Group on Monitoring Indicators.

D. Modernization of statistical production

44. The CES High-level Group (HLG) for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services oversees and coordinates internationally the ongoing strategic changes in statistical production. The UN High-level Panel's Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda talks about a "new data revolution" noting that the statistical community needs to make use of the latest innovations in information technology at both global and national levels. The Report calls for a data revolution that would draw on existing and new sources of data to fully integrate statistics into decision making and ensure increased support for statistical systems.

45. The HLG coordinates the activities of relevant expert groups in the UNECE region to ensure that they are working towards common goals. This work is based on a vision for modernizing official statistics, endorsed by the CES in June 2011, and a strategy to implement that vision, endorsed by the CES in June 2012. Both documents were reviewed and updated in 2014. The modernization work has attracted substantial extra-budgetary contributions, including from outside the UNECE region, which indicates the added value of this work for the region and beyond in ensuring the relevance and efficiency of official statistics.

46. To strengthen the work and encourage wider collaboration, a new governance structure for the work under the HLG was put in place in 2014, comprising an Executive Board and four Modernization Committees that have replaced the previous teams of specialists. The work of the Committees is based on key priorities identified by chief statisticians and representatives of relevant CES and other expert groups at the HLG workshops held in November each year.

47. The Modernization Committee on Organizational Framework and Evaluation will evaluate the value added of the different activities carried out under the HLG. It will also consider topics related to human resources, training, change management and legal and licensing issues. Outputs on these topics will include guidelines and good practices, to support the wider modernization agenda.

48. The Modernization Committee on Production and Methods will work on topics such as the development and maintenance of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), developing a common framework for statistical data editing, and identifying key trends in methodology and technology that could be harnessed to improve statistical production. This work will ensure the continued support and enhancement of previous HLG outputs, and enable statistical organizations to profit from them to the greatest extent possible.

49. The Modernization Committee on Products and Sources will follow-up on issues identified in the 2014 project on the use of Big Data for official statistics. It will also consider issues related to data collection and dissemination such as the use of mobile devices and the use of multiple collection modes and output channels. Workshops on data collection and statistical communication are envisaged. The outputs will include guidelines and good practices to support statistical organizations in their modernization activities.

50. The Modernization Committee on Standards will manage and enhance the documentation of key statistical standards and frameworks developed under the HLG. For example, the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), important tools for standardization and benchmarking statistical production, have rapidly become global standards, and have been adopted by the major partners of UNECE. Outputs will include case studies of national implementations and enhanced documentation to facilitate the understanding and use of these standards.

V. Capacity building

51. UNECE aims to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to implement international standards and guidelines. Particular attention is paid to promoting the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that provide the basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems. According to the Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda "too often development efforts have been hampered by a lack of the most basic data about the social and economic circumstances in which people live". This was also emphasized by the Rio+20 Conference that called for strengthening the institutional framework for monitoring sustainable development in all its dimensions – social, economic and environmental by means of capacity building. The UNECE review by EXCOM further reinforced the importance of capacity building as one of the priority areas of UNECE statistical work.

52. The UNECE capacity building activities include:

(a) Global assessments of national statistical systems;

(b) Training workshops;

(c) Advisory services by the UNECE experts to address country specific needs.

53. The capacity building activities are carried out in coordination and in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PARIS21, the World Bank, IMF, and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

54. The UNECE capacity building activities are based on the findings and recommendations of global assessments (GA) of national statistical systems of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. GAs are carried out together with Eurostat and EFTA, and are used by various donors active in the region, such as the World Bank. The purpose is to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. This helps the national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics, and the international donors to focus their technical cooperation activities on the identified needs. GAs recently conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine are expected to result in action plans to improve national statistics according to the recommendations. In 2015, the partner organizations (EFTA, Eurostat and UNECE) will organize an event to discuss with countries how to support, monitor and coordinate the implementation of the recommendations provided in the GAs. The scope and modalities of regular "rotating schemes" for global assessments will be agreed upon.

55. In 2014-2017, UNECE will carry out a UN Development Account project to strengthen the capacity of countries for the sustainable development of statistics. The project will support producers of official statistics in eight beneficiary countries[4] in addressing the observed statistical gaps to allow for the monitoring of their economic, social and environmental reforms. The project builds on Global Assessments of national statistical systems conducted between 2010 and 2013. In 2015, in the framework of this project, UNECE will provide advisory services and organize national and sub-regional workshops and training seminars in the relevant statistical domains, in coordination with international and bilateral partners. The objective will be to help countries to formulate,

[4] Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

prioritize and eventually incorporate Global Assessments' recommendations into strategic statistical work programmes. The project will draw on existing mechanisms and established partnerships with national and international statistical agencies, under the Conference of European Statisticians and the UN Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

56. Based on the findings of global assessments, UNECE will organize sub-regional workshops and advisory services to address current challenges in economic, social and environment statistics, modernizing statistical production, and monitoring the achievement of MDGs. The capacity building will be supported by promoting the exchange of national good practices at sub-regional level, undertaking benchmark studies and stimulating the establishment of networks of experts.

57. The SPECA Programme Working Group on Statistics[5] meets annually to discuss needs for capacity building and to coordinate donor activities. UNECE will work in 2015 on the development and fund-raising of three capacity building programmes: on economic statistics, including the implementation of the 2008 SNA; regional migration statistics; and the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) with a special focus on the water and energy accounts (in cooperation with UNESCAP). These projects would complement the ongoing capacity building activities in the region.

VI. UNECE statistical database

58. UNECE provides a statistical database offering a wide range of information on member countries via free on-line English and Russian interfaces. This work promotes open access to, and use of, data for evidence-based decision making, as requested in the Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The report also calls for data disaggregated by gender, geography, and other categories.

59. Particular emphasis is, therefore, placed on providing data on areas of high political importance to governments and to the United Nations system, such as progress towards the MDGs (under a mandate from the 2005 UNECE reform), and issues relating to migration, globalization and gender equality. The compilation of data on these topics gives insights into measurement issues, and helps identify priorities for methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of statistical systems in countries. To reduce response burden on countries, data are collected from or in cooperation with other international organizations when this is possible.

60. The database provides the source data for the popular *UNECE Countries in Figures* publication, as well as for preparing regular short articles on the economic and social development in the UNECE region, published in the *UNECE Weekly* newsletter. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2015.

61. The UNECE statistical database is also used to disseminate data for UNECE policy work. It currently includes statistics on key socio-economic issues such as globalization, population, education, employment, work-life balance, road traffic accidents, inland transport by modes, forest resources and protection as well as biological diversity. Disaggregated data on all eight MDGs are provided, as well as a Clearing House on Migration Statistics to improve data consistency at the regional level. Further work to

[5] Member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

identify suitable data on energy and environmental issues will also be undertaken in 2015. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE and beyond.

Annex I. List of meetings from January 2015 to April 2016

No.	*Meeting (venue)*	*Date*	*Capacity Building*
1	CES Bureau meeting (Geneva, Switzerland)	17-18 February 2015	
2	Workshop on Big Data (Brussels, Belgium)	9 March 2015	
3	Workshop on the Modernization of Statistical Production (Geneva, Switzerland)	15-17 April 2015	
4	Workshop on the Communication of Statistics (Washington, DC, USA)	27-29 April 2015	
5	Workshop on Statistical Data Collection: Riding the Wave of the Data Deluge, (Washington, DC, USA)	29 April-1 May 2015	
6	Workshop on Measuring Poverty and Vulnerability (Geneva, Switzerland)	4 May 2015	X
7	Seminar on Poverty Measurement (Geneva, Switzerland)	5-6 May 2015	
8	Task Force on Poverty Measurement (Geneva, Switzerland)	7-8 May 2015	
9	Workshop of the Modernization Committee on Standards: International Collaboration for Standards-Based Modernization (Geneva, Switzerland)	5-7 May 2015	
10	Workshop on International Collaboration for Standards-Based Modernization (Geneva, Switzerland)	5-7 May 2015	
11	Workshop on the implementation of the 2008 SNA in EECCA countries and linkages with BPM6 and GFSM 2014	6-8 May 2015	
12	Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland), jointly with UNECE Environment Division	11-13 May 2015	X
13	Workshop on Migration Statistics (Minsk, Belarus tbc)	28-29 May 2015	
14	63rd plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, Switzerland)	15-17 June 2015	
15	Group of experts on National Accounts: measuring global production (Geneva, Switzerland), jointly with Eurostat and OECD	7-9 July 2015	
16	Experts forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	2-3 September 2015	
17	Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (Budapest, Hungary)	14-16 September 2015	
18	Group of experts on Business Registers (Luxembourg)	21-23 September 2015	
19	Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	28-29 September 2015	X
20	Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland), jointly with Eurostat	30 September – 2 October 2015	
21	Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality (Helsinki, Finland), jointly with Eurostat	5-7 October 2015	
22	Seminar on the SEEA implementation, jointly with OECD	14-15 October 2015	
23	CES Bureau meeting (Geneva, Switzerland)	20-21 October 2015	

24	11th Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland), jointly with UNECE Environment Division	3-5 November 2015	X
25	Workshop on Statistical Modernization (Geneva, Switzerland)	25-27 November 2015	
26	Workshop on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	22-23 February 2016	
27	UNECE-Eurostat Work session on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	24-26 February 2016	
28	Workshop on Gender statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	14-15 March 2016	
29	Statistical Modernization (Geneva, Switzerland)	16-18 March 2016	
30	UNECE Work Session on Gender Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	16-18 March 2016	
31	Eurostat-UNECE Work Session on Demographic Projections (Geneva, Switzerland)	20-22 April 2016	